Political Science: 631  
Fall, 2013  
Wednesdays 6:30-9:20 pm

The Political Economy of Imperialism, Globalization, and Neo-Liberalism: Reframing the Study of International Relations

This course will provide an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the study of international relations and its connection to the world around us. The instructor believes that there is a fundamental disjuncture between what we study and research in the field of international relations and how people actually live, work, cooperate, and fight. This is the operating “hypothesis” for the course to test via reading, discussion, and debate. There is no requirement that seminar participants end up agreeing with the hypothesis. Similarly there is no requirement that participants agree with the instructor, the texts, or each other. The only thing that is required is that we all confront the literature rigorously, with passion, and intellect.

A number of texts have been chosen that address core concepts that need to be discussed: imperialism, globalization, neoliberalism and class, race, and gender. Many of these texts are not usually used in graduate seminars in international relations. We can decide in the end whether they should have been used or not.

After addressing the question of how the field of international relations is framed, the seminar will examine a variety of key issues: the theory of imperialism, globalization, neoliberalism in today’s world, and the connection between theory and practice or what is to be done to transform the world.

I am asking that each student read the works assigned and come prepared to discuss and debate their meaning and significance. Each week one “volunteer” will take the lead in presenting the text, summary and commentary, and raising issues and questions for the seminar to discuss in reference to the text and its context. Along with the text that each of us should read and be prepared to discuss, “volunteers” should provide a suggested bibliography listing some additional readings that supplement the main work that presenters particularly might want to address.

In addition, each student will prepare a seminar paper to be presented to the entire group during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Papers should address a problem that is derived from the literature in the course. It can be theoretical, historical, or empirical (or some of each). Grades will be determined by equal parts: class participation, leading class discussion, and seminar papers.
I. Framing the study of International Relations

*Week One: Course Introduction and viewing of a video on the “Commanding Heights”*

2. The Theory of Imperialism

*Week Two:*

Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*


Harry Targ, “Higher Education Today,” *MR Zine*

(provided electronically)

*Week Three:*

David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*

3. Globalization

*Week Four:*


*Week Five*


*Week Six:*


*Week Seven*


Week Eight:


Week Nine:

Prashad, chapters 3-4.

Week Ten:


Week Eleven:

David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*

5. What Is to Be Done: Some Ideas

Week Twelve


6. Seminar Paper Presentations (papers to be provided to the class one week before their presentation)

Weeks Thirteen to Fifteen